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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION

[REDACTED]

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1. PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP REAFFIRMED BY SOVIET PRESIDUM ELECTION



The composition of the new presidium and secretariat of the Soviet Communist Party reaffirms one of the main themes of the party congress--that the principle of collective leadership will be maintained.

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The top party hierarchy, with Khrushchev predominant, remains virtually intact. No change was made in the roster of 11 full members of the presidium. The fact that Malenkov and Molotov have maintained their status despite recent severe criticism illustrates the practice in the post-Stalin period of treating the loser in a policy dispute with restraint.

The number of probationary members of the presidium has been raised from two to six. Four of these, the new probationary members Brezhnev, Mukhitdinov, Shepilov and Furtseva, are full-time party workers and protégés of Khrushchev. Furtseva is the first woman to achieve this status in the party hierarchy. The promotion of Marshal Zhukov to probationary member reflects the increased recognition of the military viewpoint within the top councils of the party. One of the two old members, Shvernik, was retained.

The sole casualty of the elections was P. K. Ponomarenko, who was dropped as a presidium candidate. Ponomarenko was removed from administration of the Kazakh party organization during 1954 and is now ambassador to Poland.

The party secretariat, under First Secretary Khrushchev, has been expanded from six to eight by adding Furtseva and Brezhnev to its membership. Khrushchev's control over the secretariat, one of the key factors in determining power relationships, appears to be well solidified.

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2. YUGOSLAVS PLEASED WITH SOVIET 20TH PARTY CONGRESS DEVELOPMENTS

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[REDACTED] The general reaction in Belgrade to the Soviet 20th Party Congress is favorable, according to Ambassador Riddleberger. The Yugoslavs seem

now to believe that the USSR has definitely endorsed the principle of different roads to socialism. The Yugoslavs particularly approve the condemnation of Stalinism and Khrushchev's reference to parliamentary methods as a means of achieving socialism. They conclude that the Soviet "threat" is no longer imminent if in fact it exists at all.

Ambassador Riddleberger observes that in spite of Yugoslav efforts to minimize to Western officials the importance of Tito's message to the Soviet congress, the Yugoslavs regard it as of major significance. A Yugoslav Foreign Ministry official denied that the message indicated anything with regard to party relations, which he insisted had "not yet" been established.

Comment

Developments at the Soviet party congress appear to have gone a long way toward removing the obstacles that Yugoslav leaders felt were in the way of re-establishing official ties with the Soviet party.

The Belgrade press has applauded practically all the proceedings in Moscow, and cited them as proof of the Yugoslav view that the Soviet leaders have set their country on a new orientation.

[REDACTED] Yugoslav officials have maintained that it is now the West that is "inflexible" and the Soviet Union that is showing "flexibility," particularly through its generous offers to Belgrade.

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3. HEAVY REINFORCEMENTS REQUESTED BY LACOSTE FOR ALGERIA

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[REDACTED] Robert Lacoste, minister residing in Algeria, has requested 50,000 additional troops immediately and 50,000 more in the course of the next few months, according to Foreign Minister Pineau. Pineau told Ambassador Dillon that the French expected a serious increase in the Algerian fighting some time during March and that it was important that NATO put no difficulties in the way of the troop reinforcement.

Comment Defense Minister Bourges-Maunoury, reportedly unaware of Lacoste's request, told Dillon earlier the same day that 340,000 troops were present in North Africa. He proposed reorganizing the troops in the area, apparently including the divisions committed to NATO, into smaller units for guerrilla warfare.

Heavy reinforcements for Algeria would further strip France's already understrength contribution to NATO and would require a new call-up of reservists. The political and economic consequences of these developments would further weaken Premier Mollet's government by alienating leftist support for his Algerian policy.

✓ 4. SOVIET BLOC ARMS REPORTED ARRIVING
IN AFGHANISTAN

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[REDACTED]

A convoy of trucks which arrived in Kabul from northern Afghanistan on the night of 22 February is reported to have carried arms and ammunition, according to the American army attaché in Kabul. The Pakistani chargé and the British military attaché saw some of these trucks being unloaded at Afghan army ammunition storage locations.

Three truck drivers from the convoy stated that it carried rifles, submachine guns, hand grenades and ammunition. One source said small aerial bombs were included.

Comment

This is the firmest available information that Soviet bloc arms are actually being delivered to Afghanistan.

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**5. ARRESTED THAI MP REPORTEDLY TO BE CHARGED
WITH TREASON**

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[REDACTED]

The Thai government plans to prosecute Thep Chotinuchit, the opposition member of parliament who was arrested on his return from Communist China on 21 February, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] He will be charged with high treason and conspiracy to overthrow the govern-

ment.

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[REDACTED]

Comment

The Phibun regime, which until recently had been re-examining its strongly anti-Communist policies, last week began a widespread crackdown on elements agitating for direct relations and trade with Peiping. The government may consider it necessary to label Thep a traitor in connection with this campaign.

This about-face by the government may indicate a realignment of the internal power balance in favor of Phao at the expense of Prime Minister Phibun.

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**6. THREE NON-COMMUNIST INDONESIAN PARTIES
REPORTEDLY AGREE ON COALITION GOVERNMENT**

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[REDACTED]

The Masjumi, the National Party, and the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have agreed "in principle" to form a tripartite coalition government and

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have so informed President Sukarno, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They have as yet reached no agreement, however, on a program or a distribution of portfolios.

Comment

Representatives of these three major parties have held frequent discussions on the possibility of a tripartite coalition to the exclusion of the Communists. Increased possibility of such a coalition is believed to have resulted from the Masjumi's endorsement on 24 February of the more nationalistic policies of its Vice Chairman Sukiman as opposed to those of Chairman Natsir. Sukiman is a more skillful politician and is also more acceptable to the NU and the National Party than is Natsir.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 27 February)

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Syrian president Quwatli has confirmed press reports that he plans soon to visit Egypt, where he lived for years, to take a "needed rest." He told the American ambassador in Damascus on 23 February he did not share the concern of Syrian army officers regarding current relations with Israel.

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Two high Israeli officials have informally suggested that the United States encourage Syria and Jordan to go ahead with the proposed Yarmuk River project, a segment of the Jordan valley development scheme. The Israelis reason that Israel could then logically proceed with work on the Banat Yacov project while the "spotlight" was on the Yarmuk, and the Syrian government would save face. The American embassy in Tel Aviv believes Prime Minister Ben-Gurion feels the need for some formula to enable him to tell his cabinet that a way has been found to assure Israel's acquisition of its share of the Jordan waters.

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